

Message Text

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COMMERCE FOR BEWT/OEWD/WEISS

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TAGS: BEXP PL
SUBJ: PROPOSED EXECUTIVE LEVEL TRADE MISSION (ELTM)

REF: 77 USDOC 24052

1. WE DO NOT RECOMMEND THE ELTM FOR WARSAW. THE DESCRIPTION IN
REF SUGGESTS THAT THE MISSION WOULD REPRESENT NOT MUCH MORE THAN
A GENERAL DEMONSTRATION OF CONTINUED U.S. BUSINESS INTEREST IN
POLAND AND WOULD YIELD, AT BEST, LIMITED CONTACTS FOR U.S.
NEW-TO-MARKET (NTM) FIRMS. THE MISSION APPEARS TO LACK THE
SUBSTANCE WHICH POLISH OFFICIALS, PARTICULARLY AT THE HIGHER
LEVELS, ARE INCREASINGLY SEEKING IN THEIR APPOINTMENTS WITH FOREIGN
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BUSINESSMEN.

2. SINCE THE ELTM WOULD NOT MAKE ANY SPECIFIC SALES PRESENTATION
NOR USE THE TSS APPROACH, IT WOULD BE MUCH LESS ATTRACTIVE TO
THE POLES. FURTHERMORE, EVEN THOUGH ELTM PARTICIPANTS ARE TOP
LEVEL EXECUTIVES, THIS WILL BE NO PARTICULAR ADVANTAGE IF THEY
ARE DEALING ONLY IN GENERALITIES. THE IMPORT BOOM IS OVER.

POLISH OFFICIALS ARE NO LONGER CLAMORING FOR ADDITIONAL, SHOWCASE BUSINESS CONTACTS WITH THE WEST. WHILE LARGE NUMBERS OF WESTERN BUSINESSMEN ARE STILL VISITING POLAND REGULARLY, INDICATIONS ARE THAT HIGH-LEVEL POLISH OFFICIALS ARE ALREADY SATURATED WITH REQUESTS FOR APPOINTMENTS. IN ADDITION, THEY ARE GENERALLY FAMILIAR WITH WESTERN SOURCES OF SUPPLY FOR THOSE FEW PROJECTS WHICH WILL RECEIVE THE LARGEST SHARE OF THE LIMITED POLISH INVESTMENT FUNDS AVAILABLE IN THE NEXT TWO TO THREE YEARS. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT IF THE ELTM INCLUDES SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED FIRMS, THE POLES WILL BE SKEPTICAL OF THEIR ABILITY TO CARRY OUT LONG-TERM BUSINESS ARRANGEMENTS.

3. IN DISCUSSING THE ELTM PROPOSAL RECENTLY WITH ONE OF OUR REGULAR CONTACTS IN THE POLISH CHAMBER OF FOREIGN TRADE, WE WERE TOLD THAT GOP MINISTERS WOULD PROBABLY BE RELUCTANT TO RECEIVE THIS DELEGATION UNLESS THE PARTICIPANTS HAVE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS WHICH REQUIRE MINISTERIAL ATTENTION. OUR CONTACT ALSO SAID THE LARGE NUMBER OF BUSINESSMEN WHO BELIEVE THE BEST WAY TO PENETRATE THE POLISH MARKET IS TO START AT THE TOP IS BECOMING AN INCREASING SOURCE OF ANNOYANCE. HE ADDED THAT REQUESTS FOR MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENTS ARE MORE CAREFULLY SCREENED THESE DAYS, AND BEFORE APPOINTMENTS ARE GRANTED THE FOLLOWING TWO QUESTIONS ARE REGULARLY ASKED:

- A) WHAT IS THE ECONOMIC STANDING OF THE FIRM?
- B) WHAT IS THE SPECIFIC PROPOSAL TO BE DISCUSSED?

WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT, EXCEPT FOR THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TRADE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MINISTERS HAVE BEEN CRITICIZED FOR RECEIVING TOO MANY FOREIGN BUSINESSMEN, WITH LITTLE TO SHOW FOR IT. THEY HAVE BEEN ADVISED TO PAY MORE ATTENTION TO THEIR DOMESTIC RESPONSIBILITIES. THE CHAMBER OF FOREIGN TRADE OFFICIAL CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT, IN ALL LIKELIHOOD, ELTM MEMBERS WOULD BE REFERRED TO THE DIRECTOR LEVEL OF THE BUREAUCRACY OR EVEN TO COOPERATIVES, DEPENDING ON THE PRODUCT INVOLVED.

4. ALTHOUGH THE PRECEDING REPRESENTS ONLY ONE, ALBEIT CREDIBLE, POINT OF VIEW, IT IS NEVERTHELESS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SIGNALS WE ARE GETTING. WE ARE HAVING NO DIFFICULTY GETTING APPOINTMENTS FOR VISITING BUSINESSMEN, NOR DO WE WISH TO IMPLY THAT SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED FIRMS ARE NOT WELCOME IN POLAND. BUT POLISH OFFICIALS ARE BECOMING MORE SELECTIVE WITH APPOINTMENTS, ESPECIALLY FOR NEWCOMERS, AND SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED FIRMS MUST CONVINCE OFFICIALS THEY CAN SUCCESSFULLY COMPETE AGAINST LARGER FIRMS WHICH, AT LEAST FOR NOW, HAVE AN ADVANTAGE HERE.

5. ASIDE FROM THE ANNUAL POZNAN FAIR, WE BELIEVE THE BEST WAY FOR NTM FIRMS TO PENETRATE THE POLISH MARKET AND GET THE ATTENTION OF DECISION MAKERS, IS THROUGH THE PROGRAM OF TSS'S SPONSORED BY USDOC AND SINGLE-SPONSOR TSS'S IN THE TRADE DEVELOPMENT CENTER.

THESE PROVIDE THE SUBSTANCE OF MOST INTEREST TO THE POLES, ARE
WELL-TARGETED, AND DO NOT HAVE THE FANFARE OF THE PROPOSED ELTM.
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